

Thursday, October 11 is National Depression Screening Day

It is easy to view depression as being the same thing as feeling sad, or as not being able to cope with stress. In reality, depression is a medical condition in which specific chemicals in the nervous system are out of balance. Investing about five minutes to take an anonymous depression screening is an effective way to find out if what you are experiencing might be the result of this medical condition. As with any medical condition, proper treatment is important to return to health. The depression screening is not a professional diagnosis, but does point out possible symptoms of depression and provides referral information if you wish to consider a personal consultation with a professional.

To take a screening, go to the Employee Service Program website, www.michigan.gov/esp and click on the “Interactive Screening Program” link on the welcome page. Completing the screening takes about five minutes and is completely anonymous and can be accessed 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

Even if your results are consistent with depression, you still may have some mixed feelings about talking with a professional. It may feel a bit uncomfortable at first, but ask yourself: “Have I ever done something I felt nervous about doing and was later glad that I did?” You may look back on consulting with a professional about treatment for depression as one of the best things you ever did for yourself *and* for your loved ones. If you are uncertain about how to get started, or are unable to complete the screening online, you can contact the Michigan Employee Service Program (ESP). An ESP counselor will answer questions about depression and help you decide what options may be most helpful for you. You may schedule a confidential appointment with an ESP counselor by calling 1-800-521-1377 statewide, 517-373-7630 in the Lansing area or 1-313-456-4020 in the Detroit area.